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SECURITY INFORMATION  
SECRET

DETACHMENT 35

XOD-63

19 February 1952

SUBJECT: French Reaction to ELKO/1

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHODS EXEMPTION 3828  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2000 2006

TO: File ELKO

1. On 14 February 1952, John MEYER, DA Civilian, USPP #1757, ACO #D-096637, analyst in Counterintelligence Branch, informed 35782 that he had received for action query from the French pertaining to the Nibelungen Verlag and asked 35782 for information on the press in question. 35782 replied that the press was owned by Dr. Wilhelm HOETTL or by HOETTL's wife and that it had published Die geheime Front, HOETTL's book on SD activities which he wrote under the name of Walter HAGEN. On 18 February 1952, 35782 conferred with MEYER and Robert B. ASPREY, DA Civilian, USPP #9159, ACO #A-1613, another CIB analyst on the letter received, photocopy of which is appended to this XOD.

2. The letter from the French reads as follows in translation:

Summary of Information

"Certain businessmen in Innsbruck have received a circular letter (text of which is attached) of an entirely suspicious nature.

"This mimeographed circular was sent on 8 February 1952 from the so-called "publishing house" NIBELUNGEN-VERLAG, Linz, Bethlehemstrasse 58. A return envelope is attached.

"Some questions are of political tendency and others simply reveal military information.

"I have the honor of asking you to please make available all the information on this subject which you are able to furnish."

Attached to it is a copy in German of the questionnaire and a translation into English made by a translator of SGS.

3. 35782 did not inform CIB of the existence of Project ELKO, but discussed the matter as if the letter from the French Element were the first knowledge of the ELKO questionnaire that had come to our attention. It was agreed that the matter might be explained by one of three theories:

a. HOETTL is attempting to collect military information in the French Zone for his own use.

b. HOETTL has circulated a questionnaire knowing that it will come to French and American attention with the intention of deflecting our interest from other operations of which we may have gotten wind.

c. Some unknown person or group is attempting to discredit HOETTL with the French and probably also with the Americans.

35782 indicated that he favored the second theory.

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4. It was agreed that MEYER would reply to the French letter, stating that the Nibelungen Verlag is connected with HOETTL and providing a summary of our information on HOETTL. He would request an original sample of the questionnaire and additional information. ASPREY suggested that if we got an original sample we might forge an answer from the addresses and thus "penetrate HOETTL". 35782 agreed to give this earnest consideration.

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